

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of

Atty. Docket

RAOUL FLORENT ET AL

FR 000089

Serial No.

Group Art Unit

Filed: CONCURRENTLY

Ex.

Title: IMAGE PROCESSING METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR EXTRACTING A STRING  
OF POINTS FOLLOWING A THREADLIKE STRUCTURE IN A SEQUENCE  
OF IMAGES

Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Sir:

Prior to calculation of the filing fee and examination, please  
amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

4. (amended) The method of one of claim 1, wherein in the pursuit  
phase (30), the steps of estimation of constraints comprises the  
estimation of a Search-Zone ( $CZ_t$ ) in the image of the present  
instant (t) around the silhouette ( $\hat{G}_t$ ) for a constrained extraction  
of the final string of points ( $G_t$ ) in said Search Zone ( $CZ_t$ ).

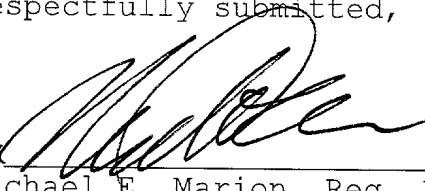
6. (amended) The method of claim 4, wherein the steps of estimation of constraints comprises the estimation of an interval of directions ( $\Delta\theta$ ) associated to the points of the Search-Zone.
9. (amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising, in the pursuit phase (30), steps of tip evaluation for determining whether the tip of the extracted string of points is correctly located for representing the threadlike structure in the image of the present instant.
11. (amended) The method of claim 1 having a loop (4) between the pursuit phase (30) and the prediction phase (30) for improving the detection of the silhouette ( $\hat{G}_t$ ) and the extraction of the string of points ( $G_t$ ) for representing the threadlike structure (GW) in the image of the present instant (t).
12. (amended) A system comprising a suitably programmed computer or a special purpose processor having circuit means, which are arranged to process image data according to the method as claimed in claim 1.
14. (amended) A computer program product comprising a set of instructions for carrying out a method as claimed in claim 1.

REMARKS

The foregoing amendments to the claims were made solely to avoid filing the claims in the multiple dependent form so as to avoid the additional filing fee.

The claims were not amended in order to address issues of patentability and Applicants respectfully reserve all rights they may have under the Doctrine of Equivalents. Applicants furthermore reserve their right to reintroduce subject matter deleted herein at a later time during the prosecution of this application or continuing applications.

Respectfully submitted,

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